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Historic Bridges and Trestles of Thurston County's Deschutes River
Basin and East Waterway \$5.00

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The Journal welcomes factual articles dealing with any aspect of Thurston County history. Please contact the editor before submitting an article to determine its suitability for publication. Articles on previously unexplored topics, new interpretations of well-known topics, and personal recollections are preferred. Articles may range in length from 100 words to 10,000 words, and should include source notes and suggested illustrations.

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HISTORIC BRIDGES AND TRESTLES OF THURSTON COUNTY'S DESCHUTES RIVER BASIN AND EAST WATERWAY

James S. Hannum, M.D.

Before Euro-Americans came to Puget Sound, the topography at the south end of Budd Inlet remained relatively stable over a long period of time. Abundant bodies of water, both fresh and salty, provided Native Americans with a ready source of food and easy transportation. Overland trails had been used for centuries and provided another avenue for trade among tribal groups.

When French Canadian, British, and American settlers began arriving, they brought their own, industrialized culture which was associated with priorities that often differed from those embraced by Native Americans. Transportation via water or trail was not always adequate to meet the requirements of the new arrivals. Wagon roads and, later, railroads were built to meet those commercial needs.

However, the plentiful water resources near Olympia and Tumwater presented a significant impediment to construction of such roads and railroads. Solving those transportation problems necessitated use of several bridges and trestles during the early modern history of the estuaries at the south end of Budd Inlet (the Deschutes River Basin and the East Waterway). In the ensuing years, most of those structures have either been removed, or partially (sometimes completely) replaced by filled rights-of-way using locally sourced material.

Arbitrarily, these structures can be grouped into three categories: bridges crossing the Deschutes River Basin or the East Waterway (also known as the Swantown Slough); bridges and trestles used by railroads; and bridges around the mouth of the Deschutes River in Tumwater.

Those crossing the Deschutes River Basin consist of: the Fourth Avenue Bridge; the Fifth Avenue Bridge; the Eastside (Swantown) Bridge; bridges along 8th Avenue, 9th Avenue, 11th Avenue, Union Avenue, and Plum Street (all of which crossed parts of the Swantown Slough); the Billings Bridge; the Long Bridge in Tumwater (Lower Tumwater Bridge); and the bridge over Interstate 5 in Tumwater.

Structures constructed by railroads

include those used by: the Olympia & Tenino Railroad; the Olympia & Chehalis Valley Railroad; the Port Townsend Southern Railroad; and the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Finally, several bridges have existed around the mouth of the Deschutes River. The larger ones carried rail (the Port Townsend Southern Railroad Bridge to the old Olympia Brewery) or wagon (the Boston Street Bridge) traffic. A newer one, the Custer Way Bridge, was built for automobiles. Footbridges were sited at or near the Upper, Middle, and Lower Falls of the Deschutes River. See Image 1.

FOURTH AVENUE BRIDGE

The earliest bridge between Olympia and West Olympia (then called Marshville) was originally called the Marshville Bridge. Somewhat later, it was also referred to as Long Bridge (which must be distinguished from another distinct bridge in Tumwater also known by that same name). In modern times, the bridge between Olympia and West Olympia is named the Olympia-Yashiro Friendship Bridge, popularly known as the Fourth Avenue Bridge.

Part of what would later become the Marshville Bridge was constructed as a wharf by Charles E. Williams in 1864. Williams's Wharf was incorporated into that portion of the Marshville Bridge located east of the drawspan when the bridge to West Olympia (Marshville) was opened to the public in 1869. See Images 2 and 3.

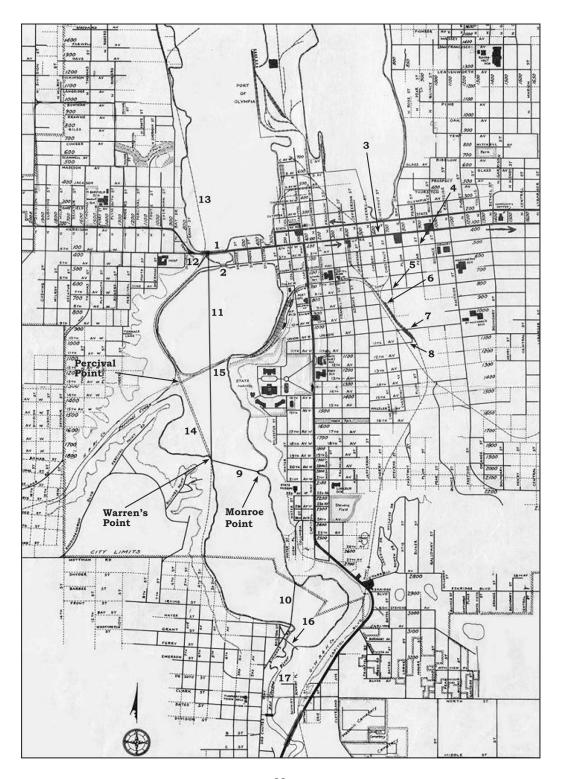
The Olympia & Tenino Railroad went into operation in 1878. Its Olympia Station was located immediately north of the Marshville Bridge, near its west end. See Image 4.

Major repairs were made to the bridge in 1881.² Toward the end of the 1880s, the name in common usage for this bridge changed from "Marshville Bridge" to "Long Bridge." About 1890, the Port Townsend Southern Railroad built a new Olympia depot located slightly west (and somewhat north) of the site of the original Olympia & Tenino Railroad's station, near the west end of the bridge.⁴ See Image 5.

In 1891, the name "Fourth Street Bridge" (at that time, what is now Fourth Avenue was called Fourth Street) appeared in a newspaper article referring to the bridge.⁵ The old drawspan was also replaced that year.⁶ The Westside Railway Company, incorporated March 20, 1891, was an electric street railway. Early in 1892, it was granted a franchise to construct track in West Olympia (Marshville) and later that year, it laid track on the Fourth Street Bridge.⁷

By 1894, it was increasingly evident that maintaining such a "Long Bridge" to West Olympia was impractical. Pilings and planking needed frequent replacement. Therefore, a reduction in the length of the bridge was accomplished by dumping material dredged from Budd Inlet at the east end of the structure.8

The Westside Railway Company was



Opposite page: Image 1. Key for location of bridges and trestles.

- 1 Fourth Avenue Bridge (in Olympia—also known as Long Bridge and the Marshville Bridge)
- 2 Fifth Avenue Bridge
- 3 Eastside Bridge (Swantown Bridge)
- 4 Plum Street Bridge
- 5 Eighth Street (now Avenue) Bridge
- 6 Ninth Street (now Avenue) Bridge
- 7 Union Street (now Avenue) Bridge
- 8 Eleventh Street (now Avenue) Bridge
- 9 Billings Bridge
- 10 Long Bridge (in Tumwater—also known as Lower Tumwater Bridge)
- 11 Olympia & Tenino Railroad Trestle
- 12 Olympia & Chehalis Valley Railroad Trestle
- 13 Port Townsend Southern Railroad Trestle
- 14 Olympia & Chehalis Valley Railroad Trestle
- 15 Northern Pacific Railroad Bridge
- 16 Port Townsend Southern Railroad Bridge to the old Olympia Brewery
- 17 Several Tumwater bridges

The base map is part of the 1951 City of Olympia Washington map, courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives. Tumwater's Interstate 5 Bridge is not included here because it overlaps the place where, previously, the Long Bridge in Tumwater was located.

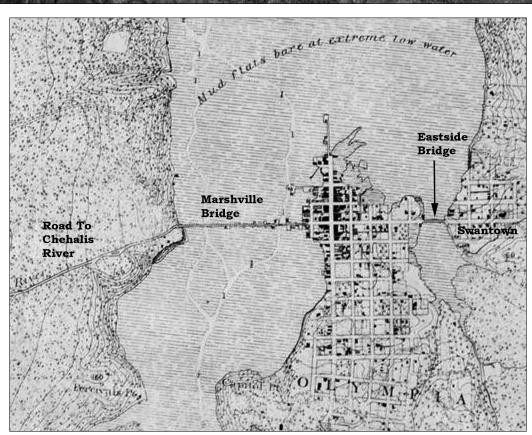
out of business by 1897 and thereafter, no trolley traffic crossed the bridge until 1911, when cars operated by Olympia Light & Power Company resumed service to West Olympia.⁹ See Image 6.

In 1915, it was clear that the entire bridge connecting Fourth Street to West Olympia needed to be replaced with a concrete structure tall enough to accommodate maritime traffic travelling between Budd Inlet and the Deschutes River Basin. This would eliminate the requirement for a drawspan on the bridge and get rid of the Port Townsend Southern Railroad grade crossing that existed at the west end of the existing wooden bridge. The decision to erect a new bridge was precipitated on March 15, 1915 by collapse of the piers supporting the hinge mechanism of the drawspan.¹⁰ The Union Bridge Company of Portland, Oregon was awarded the contract to build the new concrete bridge.11

The new concrete bridge was not nearly as long as its predecessor. It was described in a *Washington Standard* article: "Long bridge is now practically a solid causeway of earth. . . . The fill of Long Bridge has been completed. The central fill is 862 feet in length and the westside fill 250 feet. A waterway of 300 feet has been left for the west channel just east of the depot." The new Fourth Street Bridge was dedicated on June 23, 1921. See Images 7 and 8.

An online article on ThurstonTalk de-





tails the later history of the concrete bridge dedicated in 1921: "By 1995 however, the city determined that the bridge was deteriorating and needed to be replaced. On February 28, 2001, the 6.8 magnitude Nisqually Earthquake struck, and the damaged structure was closed to traffic. Construction of a new bridge began on November 15, 2001.

"Two roundabouts above the bridge were constructed as well as a relocated Park of the Seven Oars. The span was formally dedicated on May 16, 2004 and named the Olympia-Yashiro Friendship Bridge. Yashiro, now renamed Kato, is a city in Japan's Hyogo Prefecture that has been Olympia's sister city since April 22, 1981."

Opposite top: Image 2. The view east-northeast from West Olympia, dated 1869-1874. The earliest Fourth Avenue Bridge is visible as it crossed the Deschutes Estuary. Image courtesy of Washington State Historical Society, Catalog ID C1949.1301.33.34.

Opposite bottom: Image 3. Part of the 1876 nautical chart Budd's Inlet, Puget Sound, W. T. The Marshville Bridge and the Eastside Bridge to Swantown are visible. Chart produced by the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, revised 1882. Image courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives (https://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Record/View/3AFA31C23C180CC9E: accessed November 10, 2022).

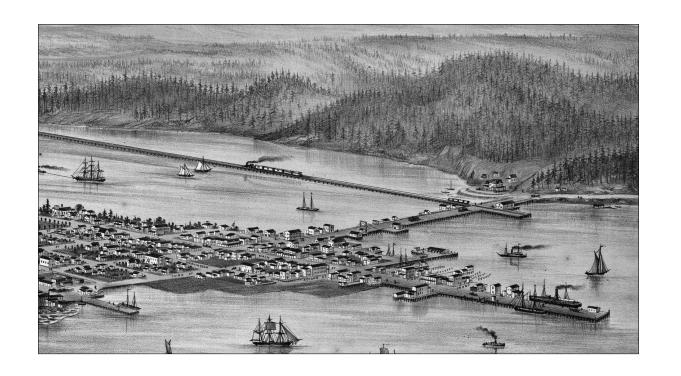
The bridge dedicated in 2004 is the one connecting Fourth Avenue with West Olympia in 2023.

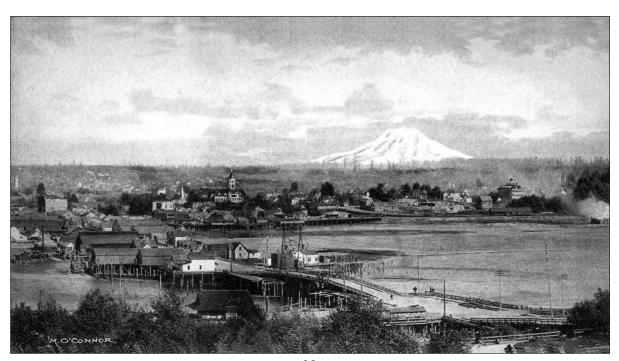
FIFTH AVENUE BRIDGE

The possibility of creating a freshwater lake south of Fourth Avenue was seriously considered (but rejected) in 1915 when the existing Fourth Street Bridge needed to be replaced. 15 But in the late 1940s, a plan was adopted which would turn the Deschutes River Basin into Capitol Lake. It involved extending to the west what is now Fifth Avenue, connecting it to West Olympia. A dam and spillway were constructed along the extension, with a motor vehicle bridge crossing the dam.

This project also included building another roadway (Deschutes Parkway) which would connect to the west end of the Fifth Avenue extension, as well as the creation of Olympia's lakeside Heritage Park. The entire enterprise required placing a large quantity of fill material for the park and new roadways. Much of that fill was sourced from a borrow pit located nearby at Percival Point. See Images 9 and 10.

Construction of the dam and bridge was completed in 1951.¹⁶ Both are still in use in 2023, although recently, the State of Washington has decided to remove that dam and convert Capitol Lake back into a tidal estuary. The project will take more than a decade to complete.





EASTSIDE (SWANTOWN) BRIDGE

Before 1910, a saltwater estuary existed on the east side of Olympia. Known as the East Waterway, it stretched south as far as the mouth of Moxlie Creek. It presented a barrier to travel in and out of Olympia from the east, where the community known as Swantown, named for John M. Swan, was located.

The website *The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Swantown* ex-

Opposite top: Image 4. Part of the 1879 Birds-eye View of the City of Olympia, East Olympia and Tumwater, Puget Sound, Washington Territory, drawn by E. S. Glover, Portland, Oregon. The Olympia & Tenino Railroad had begun operating in 1878, with its Olympia Station located near the west end of the Marshville Bridge. The drawspan of the bridge is visible near the east end of the bridge. Image courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives (https://www.digitalar chives.wa.gov/Record/View/ E90B300A1D34F6401D00CCA4E627 3070 : accessed November 10, 2022).

Opposite bottom: Image 5. An 1890 M. O'Connor photograph looking east and slightly south from a position in West Olympia. In the foreground is Olympia's new Port Townsend Southern Railroad station located near the west end of the Fourth Street (now Avenue) Bridge. Photograph courtesy of Washington State Archives, State Library Photo Collection.

plains: "The East bay of Budd's Inlet originally extended as far as Union Avenue, and the only way to reach the east side was to take a canoe at high tide, or walk across the mud flats. In April of 1854, a footbridge was built to the east side. On October 14, 1854, the contract for the building [of] a bridge across the east bay was awarded by the Sheriff, to J. L. Perkins of Olympia. The cost of the bridge was \$1,550 with the county covering \$500 of the cost, and a private subscription was responsible for the remainder.

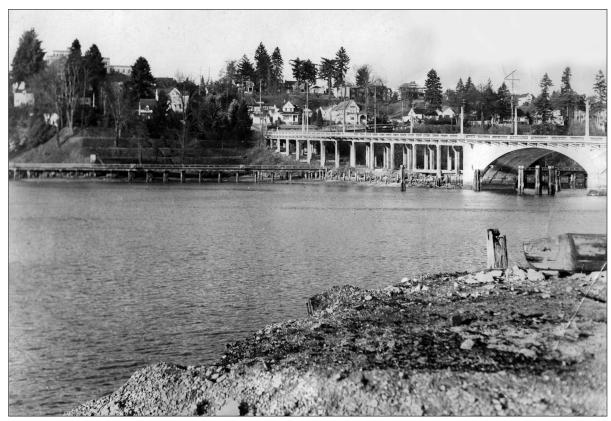
". . The bridge was completed around December 25, 1854.

"In 1859 the first road leading east from Olympia was constructed. This road, now 4th Avenue, ran up Ayers' [sic] hill to the prairies. That same year, Swan platted out 'Swan's Addition' to the city of Olympia and began to sell lots. . . . The addition quickly became known as 'Swantown,' and the tide flats separating them from Olympia would become known as the Swantown Slough." 17

The original Swantown bridge had become unsafe by 1866 and was replaced, with work commencing in 1867 and finishing in 1868. See Image 11.

A third bridge was completed at that location in 1886: "The Swantown bridge became known as the Eastside bridge in the 1880's, and on August 3, 1886, a new Eastside bridge was completed over the slough. The bridge was 300 feet long, and 20 feet wide with 3-





inch planking."¹⁹ See Images 12 and 13.

The Carlyon Fill was an ambitious project which was carried out between 1910 and 1912.20 The south end of Budd Inlet was dredged to make it more accessible at low tide. The spoils were discharged in places where new, dry land was desired. Many new city blocks were created north of the original Olympia townsite. Also, Swantown Slough was filled in and thus obliterated as far north as modern Olympia Avenue. Through that filled area, Moxlie Creek now runs in an underground pipe, emptying into the East Waterway immediately north of Olympia Avenue. Once the Carlyon Fill was completed, all of Fourth Street lay on solid ground, so a bridge was no longer necessary where it had previously existed.

Opposite top: Image 6. An 1899 photograph facing southeast from a position in West Olympia. Trolley tracks are visible in the middle of the Fourth Street Bridge. Image courtesy of Bygonely (https://www.bygonely.com/olympia-1890s/: accessed November 14, 2022).

Opposite bottom: Image 7. A 1922 photograph of West Olympia and the new concrete Fourth Street Bridge. The view is toward the northwest. The image is part of the Olympia Fire Department Photograph Collection, 1885-1980, Washington State Archives, Digital Archives.

BRIDGES ALONG 8TH, 9TH, 11TH, AND UNION AVENUES, AND PLUM STREET

Smaller bridges were located at other places on the East Waterway. As with the Fourth Avenue Bridge, they no longer existed after the Swantown Slough was filled in. The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Swantown reports: "There were at least 3 bridges built across the East Bay at 8th, 11th, and Union Avenue."21 A bridge on 9th Street (Avenue) was present as early as 1879. It is visible in Image 11. The bridge on Union Street (Avenue) was constructed about 1890. "On motion, the plan for Union Street bridge was adopted, and the plan for the Eighth Street bridge referred to the Committee on Streets.

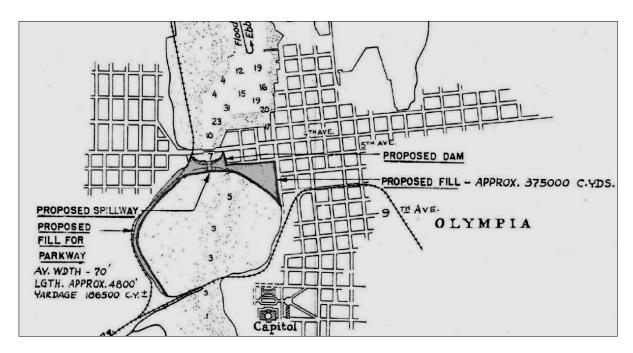
"The Olympia Construction Company submitted a bid for the construction of Union street bridge in accordance with the plans adopted for \$2,100. Moved that the bid be accepted. Motion carried."22

The bridge on 11th Street (Avenue) was built in 1876: "On August 5, 1876, Mr. Mossman was awarded a contract to construct a new road to the top of Ayer's hill and for the building of a new bridge on 11th Avenue [then Street] near Judge Green's residence." Contracts for constructing a bridge on Plum Street, crossing part of the Swantown Slough, were awarded in 1891.24

BILLINGS BRIDGE

The Billings Bridge was named for





William Billings, a Thurston County pioneer who was Thurston County Sheriff for 24 years during Territorial times. The bridge connected Warren's Point (in West Olympia) to a point on the east side of the Deschutes Basin. Built in 1890, it is the least well-known structure included in this article, for there is no agreement as to where the east end of the bridge was located. Some references name Monroe Point, south of the State Capitol,

Opposite top: Image 8. A view west along the concrete bridge dedicated in 1921. Trolley tracks are visible on the bridge. Image courtesy of Bygonely (https://www.bygonely.com/olympia-1890s/: accessed November 15, 2022). At that website, the caption associated with this image declares that it was made in 1918. However, that statement appears to be in error since the contract for building the bridge was not let until 1919.

Opposite bottom: Image 9. Part of the location map included with the February 3, 1949 permit issued to the US Army Corps of Engineers for construction related to the creation of Capitol Lake. Areas to be filled appear shaded. Fill material used in building Deschutes Parkway amounted to 186,500 cubic yards, and 375,000 cubic yards for Heritage Park. The image is part of A Land Use History of Capitol Lake, accessed online on September 7, 2022. Sometime after that date, this item was removed from the internet.

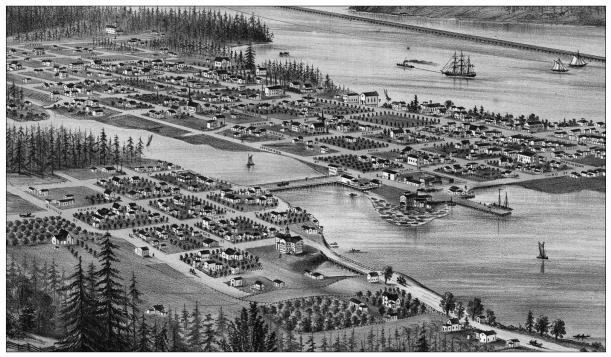
as that terminal. Others suggest a location farther north, at Capitol Point. See Image 14.

One might ask why a bridge would have been considered for this location. The likely answer is that Billings had already platted Billings Addition, in West Olympia. Such a bridge would allow easier access to it from the Capitol grounds, when compared with the Marshville Bridge. However, to access most of Billings Addition from Warren's Point, a steep road (similar to today's Lakeridge Drive) would have been necessary. In the end, perhaps that scheme proved to be impractical in an era before automobiles were available. See Image 15.

Newspaper articles from 1890 seem confused about where the east end of the bridge was located. "The bridge to the Billings Addition formerly known as Warren's point will skirt the bank fronting the new hotel, and span the inlet at Capitol point. It will be 20 feet wide, about 1,000 feet long and completed within the next month."25 This statement is ambiguous, for Capitol Point actually stretches for a significant distance along the east side of the Deschutes River Basin. Capitol Point also was the location for the Northern Pacific Railroad's trestle crossing the basin. See Image 16.

Two months later, a somewhat different eastern terminal was named: "The bridge spanning the inlet from Capitol Hill to Warren's Point, has been completed, and soon as the roadway is





open will afford a pleasant drive to our Westside suburbs."²⁶ A map produced in 1895 shows an eastern terminal well north of Monroe Point.

The author found no further mention of the Billings Bridge after 1895, although many of its pilings persisted for a while after the superstructure was removed. Perhaps Billings failed to attract enough buyers for the lots in Billings Addition to make it worthwhile maintaining the bridge. See Image 17.

LONG BRIDGE IN TUMWATER

Distinct from the bridge linking Olympia and West Olympia, Tumwater also had its own structure called "Long Bridge." It connected the southern part of Olympia with the main indus-

Opposite top: Image 10. A 1949 photograph showing construction of the extension of Fifth Avenue, Fifth Avenue Bridge, and its associated dam. The view is toward the east from West Olympia. Recently deposited fill is visible in the foreground. From the Susan Parish Photograph Collection, 1889-1990, Washington State Archives, Digital Archives, AR-25501080-ph000 086.

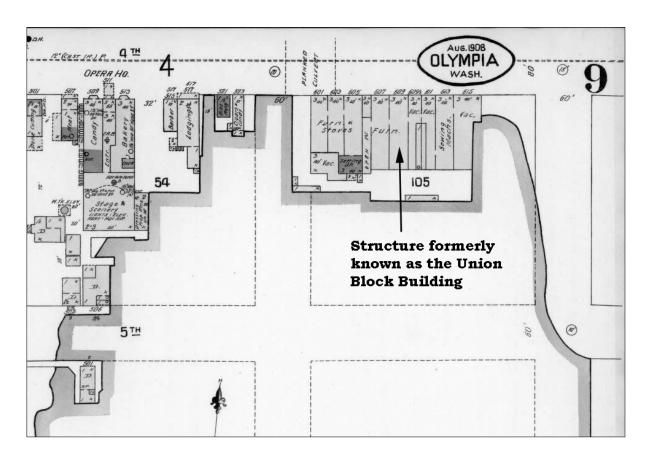
Opposite bottom: Image 11. The Swantown Bridge in 1879. The view is toward the southwest with Swantown on the left side of the foreground. From Birds-eye View of the City of Olympia, East Olympia and Tumwater, Puget Sound, Washington Territory.

trial area of Tumwater and was often referred to as the Lower Tumwater Bridge.

Tumwater's Long Bridge was proposed and built in 1869. "On January 31, 1869, a petition was in circulation for the purpose of raising funds for a new bridge at Tumwater. On February 13, 1869, the piles were being cut for the new Lower Tumwater bridge. The county had accepted the subscription list as adequate, and guaranteed it's [sic] completion. On April 24, 1869, a contract to construct a bridge over the mud flats from Tumwater to Olympia was let to Oliver Shead, and brothers George W. French, and J. S. French for the cost of \$4,000. On June 25, 1869, the Lower Tumwater bridge was almost completed, and after the draw was finished, foot traffic was allowed to cross."27 The last part of the project to be completed was a new road connecting Olympia to the north end of the bridge. See Image 18.

"The Tumwater Bridge – This bridge is now completed, but the grading of the road leading to the north end, has been, for some inexplicable reason, postponed. . . . The bridge appears to be substantially built. The 'draw' swings around at right-angles with the bridge, instead of sliding aside as in the Olympia and Marshville bridge." In 2023, Old Oregon Trail SW occupies the northern part of the road that led to the north end of Long Bridge. See Images 19 and 20.

The bridge underwent a major rebuilding project in 1885. Ward & Sons per-





formed the work.²⁹ In 1894, the bridge was almost destroyed by fire: "On July 6, 1894, the Lower Tumwater bridge came near being consumed by fire. It appears that someone lit a cigarette and carelessly tossed a match into some material that caught the bridge on fire. The burning portion was cut away to save the rest of the bridge."³⁰ See Image 21.

The Long (Lower Tumwater) Bridge

Opposite top: Image 12. The area of the Swantown Slough immediately south of Fourth Street (now Avenue). The building on the south side of Fourth Street was constructed on pilings driven into the slough. In the corresponding map from 1896, this structure housed the Union Block Hotel, and the entire area on the south side of the bridge, between Cherry and Chestnut Streets, was called the Union Block. From Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, Olympia, August 1908, Sheet 9 (https://www.loc.gov/ $resource/q4284om.g4284om_g0$ 92701908/?st=gallery: accessed November 20, 2022).

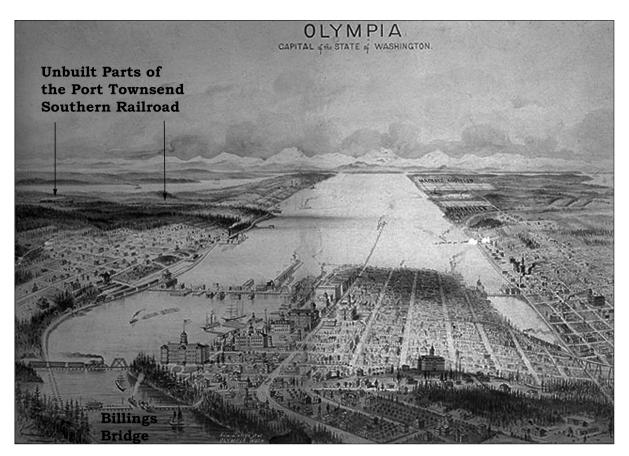
Opposite bottom: Image 13. An 1894 view southeast toward the Union Block Building. The image appears on the website of the Olympia Historical Society and Bigelow House Museum (https://olympiahistory.org/union-block-10-2-22/: accessed November 20, 2022). The original photograph is courtesy of the State Capitol Collection, Washington State Historical Society.

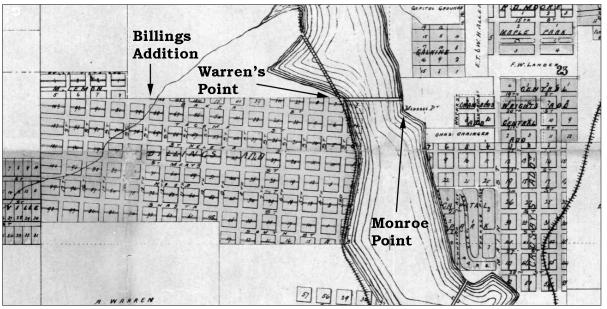
was replaced in 1905: "On August 29, 1905, the County Commissioners approved plans for the building of a new lower bridge across the mudflats at Tumwater. The bridge had a 50 foot Howe truss across the channel that was raised 5 feet above the level of the old bridge." 31

Just when the Long Bridge was permanently closed to traffic is unclear. Probably one major reason for its closure was the difficult uphill grade at the north end of the bridge. In 1896, that stretch of road was described: "The road leading from upper Main street to Tumwater by way of the lower bridge, is dangerous and practically impassable. The road leading down the hill is cut up into miniature canyons quite suggestive of the bed of the Colorado river, and they are deep enough to overturn a carriage or loaded wagon. Every heavy rain is making the hill more difficult to repair, . . . "32 The bridge still appears on the 1924 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of Olympia but is not present on the 1934 US Geological Survey of the Olympia Quadrangle. Remnants of the bridge persisted for years after it was abandoned and were finally obliterated when the Interstate 5 Bridge in Tumwater was constructed. See Image 22.

INTERSTATE 5 BRIDGE IN TUMWATER

Construction of Interstate 5 in the 1950s involved building a new bridge across the Deschutes River Basin between the south part of Olympia and





Tumwater. "In 1954, the expressway between Centralia and Trosper Road, Exit 102 had been completed. . . . Construction began on the freeway between Tumwater (Exit 102) and Lacey (Exit 109) in 1955. It took 4 years to complete the project. The new freeway opened on December 12, 1958."³³ See Images 23 and 24.

In subsequent years, additional fill material was placed at the south end of Capitol Lake, forming the Interpretive Park. The Interstate 5 Bridge re-

Opposite top: Image 14. This is an 1890 Edward Lange etching which includes the Billings Bridge in the lower left corner. The view is looking north and clearly shows other features which were never constructed, such as the unbuilt portions of the Port Townsend Southern Railroad. A trolley and a swing bridge are visible on this representation of the bridge. However, none of the trolley companies that received a franchise from the City of Olympia expressed plans to operate over this bridge. Olympia, Capitol of the State of Washington, courtesy of Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, Catalog ID: C1943.1006.29.

Opposite bottom: Image 15. Billings Addition, Warren's Point, and Monroe Point in 1890. From Whitham & Page's Map of Olympia and Surroundings, Thurston Co., Washington, 1890 (https://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Record/View/229379766FDB46644 56185DB47BE34FC: accessed November 24, 2022).

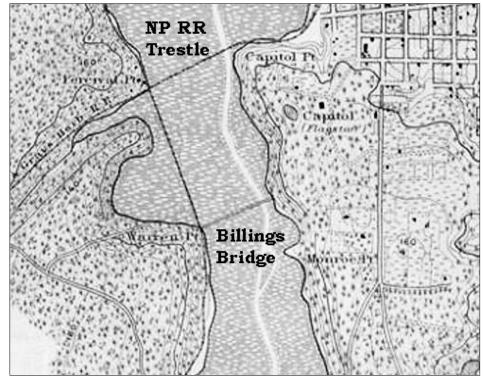
mains essentially the same in appearance as when built.

OLYMPIA & TENINO RAILROAD TRESTLE

The narrow-gauge railroad linking West Olympia to Tenino went into operation in 1878. Although its builders desired to secure a dry-land right-of-way along the west side of what is now Capitol Lake, they were unable to obtain title to the required property between Percival Point and the west end of the Marshville Bridge. Therefore, the Olympia & Tenino Railroad used a lengthy trestle between Warren's Point and the Marshville Bridge. Part of that trestle is visible in Image 4. See Image 25.

OLYMPIA & CHEHALIS VALLEY RAILROAD TRESTLE

In 1886, the Olympia & Chehalis Valley Railroad (successor to the Olympia & Tenino Railroad) abandoned the trestle originating at Warren's Point. A new one was built from Warren's Point to Percival Point; north of there, the right-of-way was moved to the west side of the Deschutes Basin (from Percival Point to a point southwest of the Marshville Bridge). Immediately south of the Marshville Bridge, a short segment of trestlework was constructed to connect the existing station on the bridge to the new rightof-way. After 1890, the Port Townsend Southern Railroad continued to use most of this new Percival Point route. except for the portion connecting to the old (and by then abandoned)





Olympia & Tenino Railroad Station. See Images 26 and 27.

PORT TOWNSEND SOUTHERN RAILROAD TRESTLE NORTH OF THE MARSHVILLE BRIDGE

In 1891, the Port Townsend Southern Railroad completed a three-mile extension to the north which began at the Marshville Bridge and ended immediately south of Butler Cove. The

Opposite top: Image 16. Part of an 1895 nautical chart with a representation of the Billings Bridge. The eastern terminal is north of Monroe Point. Olympia Harbor Puget Sound Washington, published by the United States Coast and Geodesic Survey (https://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Digital Object/View/003AFED8C79A8A6AC4 AA48C8128963A6: accessed November 24, 2022).

Opposite bottom: Image 17. This photograph presents a view north from Tumwater over the Deschutes Basin. The description associated with the image dates it between 1890 and 1900. Pilings from the Billings Bridge are visible. Beyond the pilings is the Northern Pacific Railroad Bridge. Currently housed at the Brewmaster's House, the picture is part of the City of Tumwater Photo Collection, HHM041. Remnants of the pilings were still visible at low tide as late as 1938 (see Washington State Digital Archives at https://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/ Record/View/745D30DD395C30 71F677755920CE851F).

new track ran on trestlework for approximately the first 0.6 mile north of the bridge. Years later, that trestle was converted into a filled right-of-way, which can be seen in 2023. The north half of the three-mile extension was abandoned by the railroad in 1894.³⁴ See Image 28.

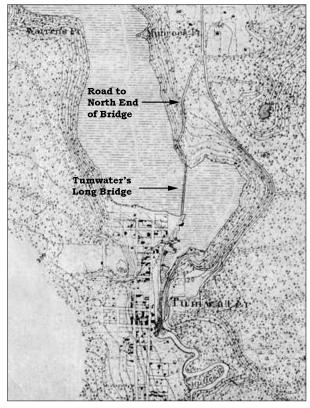
NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD BRIDGE AND TRESTLE ON CAPITOL LAKE

The Northern Pacific Railroad constructed a new mainline through what is now Lacey, through downtown Olympia, and on to Grays Harbor, in 1890. Originally, it crossed the Deschutes River Basin via a trestle with a movable bridge at its eastern end (see Image 14). Later, most of the trestle was converted to a causeway when fill material was dumped along the course of the trestle. See Image 29.

PORT TOWNSEND SOUTHERN RAILROAD BRIDGE TO THE OLD OLYMPIA BREWERY

In the first decade of the 20th Century, the Port Townsend Southern Railroad built a spur from its mainline to the old Olympia Brewery. The spur crossed the mouth of the Deschutes River by bridge. See Image 30.

By 1944, the rail spur to the old Olympia Brewery was owned by the Northern Pacific Railroad. In April of that year, the spur was abandoned and the bridge became a truck bridge.³⁵ Image 22 shows the bridge after tracks were removed. Severe







flooding of the Deschutes River on January 16, 1974 washed away the eastern part of the bridge.³⁶ It was not rebuilt and subsequently the remaining portion was removed.

BOSTON STREET BRIDGE— UPPER TUMWATER BRIDGE

The first bridge located immediately downriver from the Upper Falls of the Deschutes River was known originally

Opposite top left: Image 18. Part of the 1876 nautical chart Budd's Inlet, Puget Sound, W. T. Long Bridge (the Lower Tumwater Bridge), built in 1869, is visible along with a new road (also finished in 1869) leading from Olympia to the north end of the bridge.

Opposite top right: Image 19. A view to the northwest from Tumwater. The Long Bridge is visible in this circa 1878 image made from approximately where the Schmidt House is in modern times. The Biles Tannery is visible in the foreground. Photograph courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, The Head of Puget Sound, Washington Territory, PH Coll 31.CON TINENT4c, Order Number STE126.

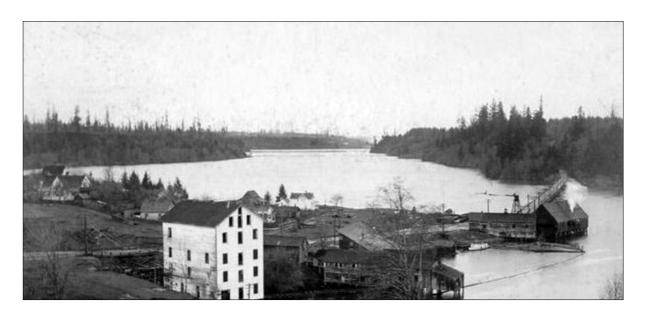
Opposite bottom: Image 20. An approximately 1880 view toward the south made from a position near the north end of Long Bridge. Tumwater is visible in the distance. The swing mechanism of the bridge can be seen in the foreground. Photograph courtesy of Washington State Historical Society, Catalog ID C1961.498.9.

as the Upper Tumwater Bridge. That name distinguished it from the Lower Tumwater Bridge (also called Tumwater's Long Bridge) connecting the south part of Olympia with Tumwater. "The first bridge [Upper Tumwater Bridge] over the [Deschutes] river was completed at the end of February 1853, between the falls, and near the [Ward & Hays] grist mill. . . . The bridge would be replaced in the 1870's and again around 1900. Wooden bridges did not last very long." See Images 31, 32, and 33.

"On November 15, 1915, the new concrete bridge across the Deschutes River at Tumwater was completed." Now called the Boston Street Bridge, it is still used in 2023. See Image 34.

CUSTER WAY BRIDGE

The Custer Way Bridge was conceived as a mechanism to reunite the east and west sides of Tumwater after that community would be split by construction of Interstate 5. "In 1955 construction began on the new Olympia-Tumwater freeway [Interstate 5]. The freeway would be built right through Tumwater splitting the town in half. In 1956, the Custer Way Bridge was completed. This bridge was built just north of the Boston Street bridge, and was constructed to span the new freeway and reconnect East and West Tumwater."39 On the west side of Interstate 5, the Custer Way Bridge connects to 2nd Avenue SW in Tumwater. It continues to be used in 2023.





FOOTBRIDGES IN TUMWATER ALONG THE DESCHUTES RIVER

The footbridges in Tumwater can be grouped arbitrarily by their proximity to the Upper, Middle, and Lower Falls of the Deschutes River. Although the Upper and Lower Falls are easily located, the original site of the Middle Falls is not nearly as evident in 2023.

Opposite top: Image 21. The view north over the Deschutes Basin from a position east of the Deschutes River in Tumwater. This 1890 photograph shows the Long Bridge on the right side of the image. The recently constructed Northern Pacific Railroad trestle is visible as a thin horizontal line in the far distance. Just below the trestle is another faint line which may represent the Billings Bridge. Remains of the west abutment of the bridge visible in Image 45 can be seen next to the five-story Crosby mill. Photograph courtesy of Washington State Historical Society, Catalog ID C2017.0.176.

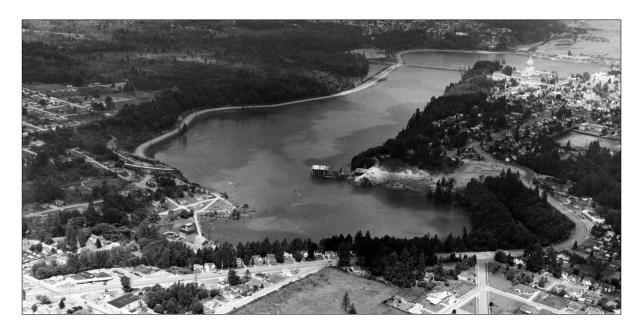
Opposite bottom: Image 22. A 1946 aerial photograph made from a position above the south part of Olympia's Capitol neighborhood. The view is toward the southeast. Much of the center part of the abandoned Long Bridge is visible along with a smaller part of the bridge's north end. The buildings of the old Olympia Brewery are visible in the center-right portion of the picture. Photograph courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives; Olympia, Port of, Commissioners, Photograph Collection, SW-684A01022-ph000002.

The existing footbridge near the Upper Falls is a relatively recent addition to that area. It was constructed in 1962 as part of the Tumwater Falls Park.⁴⁰ See Image 35.

In modern times, it is challenging to determine the precise location of the Middle Falls before Tumwater (earlier called New Market) was founded, for many man-made alterations of the nearby terrain have occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries. Those include two separate dams, the Gelbach Flouring Mill, a powerhouse built in the early 1890s by the Olympia Light & Power Company, and in the 1950s, a fish ladder.

In March 1879, George Gelbach bought 2.37 acres of land on the Deschutes River in Tumwater.⁴¹ There, he used dynamite to prepare the site for construction of his flour mill, located on the west side of the river.⁴². Gelbach also dammed the river to provide power to the mill.⁴³ This dam, erected at the upriver end of the mill, can be seen in Image 32. It was built at the approximate position of the preexisting Middle Falls.

Gelbach sold his mill and its associated dam in May 1890.⁴⁴ The purchaser was Edward Thomas Young, who formally transferred that property to the Olympia Light & Power Company (of which Young was president) in August 1891.⁴⁵ By October 1890, Young's company had constructed a new dam and powerhouse approximately 100 feet downriver from the Gelbach





Mill.⁴⁶ It supplied electricity used to operate the early trolley system in Olympia and Tumwater, and to illuminate both communities. See Image 36.

In 2023, the concrete foundation of the Olympia Light & Power Company's powerhouse, just downriver from the Middle Falls, is still evident on the west side of the river. The foundation can be used as a convenient reference point, for the dam was located at the upriver end of the powerhouse. See Image 37.

Opposite top: Image 23. A 1956 aerial photo of the south end of the Deschutes Basin. Preliminary work has been done in preparation for construction of the Interstate 5 Bridge. The bluff carrying Capitol Boulevard between south Olympia and Tumwater was still intact, although soon it would be removed and the earth used as fill for the approaches on both ends of the Interstate 5 Bridge. Photograph courtesy of Washington Digital Archives.

Opposite bottom: Image 24. A 1957 aerial photograph of the south end of the Deschutes Basin. The Interstate 5 Bridge is visible and the Interstate 5 right-of-way on both sides of the bridge has been graded. A bridge for Capitol Boulevard has been constructed over that right-of-way. Photograph courtesy of A Land Use History of Capitol Lake, prepared by Rolin P. Christopherson, M.A., Historical Geographer for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Aquatic Resources Division, 2020.

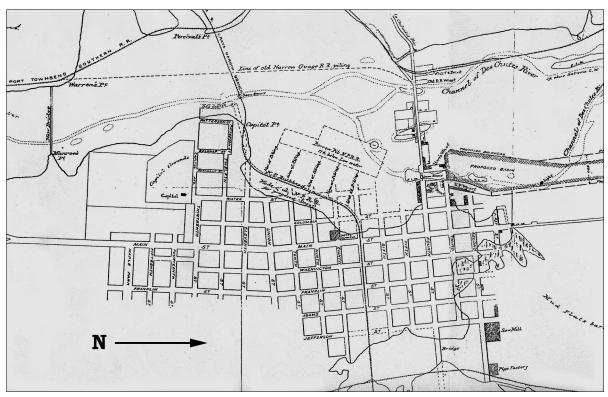
About 1905, the Olympia Light & Power Company began using a new, larger powerhouse located at the Lower Falls of the Deschutes. The flume that had supplied the earlier powerhouse (seen in Image 36) was removed and a larger, metal conduit was installed. It led to the new powerhouse at the Lower Falls. See Image 38.

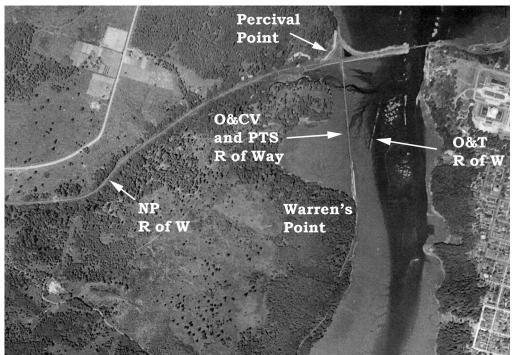
There was discussion about building a bridge suitable for wagon traffic at the Middle Falls in 1883.⁴⁷ But the only bridge known to have been built anywhere in the vicinity of those falls was for foot traffic only. Little is known about it other than its location. It was sited downriver from the original Olympia Light & Power Company powerhouse, and well upriver from the Lower Falls. See Image 39.

The date of removal for this bridge could not be determined. But its former location is easily found in modern times. See Image 40.

Over the decades, a series of footbridges have crossed directly over the Lower Falls. One source declares that the first bridge was constructed in the 1890s. "The original Tumwater footbridge over the lower falls was built in the early 1890s and used solely for foot traffic." However, that statement is called into question by information accompanying Image 41, which suggests that a footbridge was constructed over the Lower Falls between 1860 and 1885. See Image 41.

A later version of the bridge at the Lower Falls can be seen in Image 42.





After construction of the Olympia Light & Power Company's powerhouse at the Lower Falls (and the flume leading to it), the footbridge at the Lower Falls had to be remodeled greatly. See Image 43.

At some later time, that bridge was removed. It is absent in the online photograph accessed at CatalogIt HUB on January 1, 2023: (https://hub.catalogit.app/7254/folder/e1e50af0-5c61-11ec-9e13-e1521a7fe368/entry/0a158a80-584e-11ec-9795-17b3c3c30d90). This image can be dated between 1956 and 1962.

Opposite top: Image 25. An 1892 map of the Olympia Harbor. A dashed line identifies the course of the (by then) abandoned Olympia & Tenino Railroad trestle. Olympia Harbor Washington: Map Showing Proposed Improvements (1891) (https://content.libraries.wsu.edu/digital/collection/maps/id/206/: accessed November 29, 2022).

Opposite bottom: Image 26. Part of a 1936 aerial photograph of the Deschutes Basin. With the tide out, a remnant of the Olympia & Tenino Railroad trestle between Warren's Point and the Marshville Bridge could still be seen. A newer trestle, used by the Port Townsend Southern Railroad (and originally constructed by the Olympia & Chehalis Valley Railroad) was visible, connecting Warren's Point and Percival Point. Photograph courtesy of Thurston County Roads and Transportation Services.

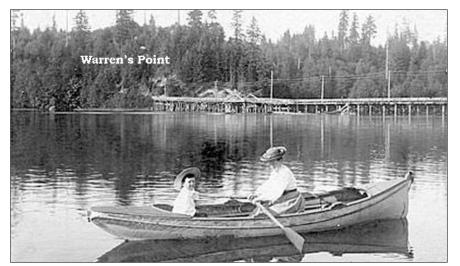
A new footbridge was built at the Lower Falls in 1962 as part of Tumwater Falls Park. It was a replica of the wooden truss bridge which had existed there in years past. In the same year, the Lower Falls powerhouse was removed, except for its concrete foundation.⁴⁹

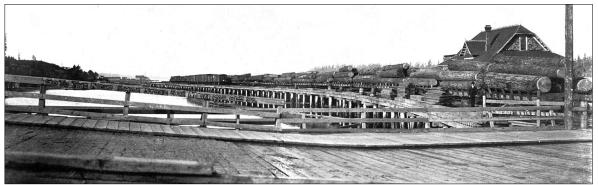
The east span of the truss bridge was destroyed by a falling tree during a windstorm in December 1995. That segment was replaced in July 1996.⁵⁰ See Image 44.

The earliest bridge near the mouth of the Deschutes River was constructed in 1859. "New Bridge - A new bridge across the De Shutes river has just been commenced about a quarter of a mile below the one just finished [the Upper Tumwater Bridge]. We understand it is being built entirely by private enterprise, and that it will cost about \$2,000. It will cross the river at the lower falls, above the mill of Messrs. Crosby & Barnes, and the tannery of Messrs. Biles & Carter. The bridge will be some four hundred feet in length. . . . The bridge will be free [no toll]."51

The concrete foundation previously used by the powerhouse at the Lower Falls can be used as a reference point to imagine where this structure was located. Its site was approximately 100 yards downriver from the foundation. See Image 45.

This bridge is also visible in a photograph available online at https://hub.catalogit.app/7254/folder/e1e50af0-







Opposite top: Image 27. An 1890s view toward the southwest, across the Deschutes Basin. The Olympia & Tenino Railroad trestle was no longer present. Warren's Point, in the distance, was at the south end of the Port Townsend Southern Railroad's trestle between that point and Percival Point. In 2023, Deschutes Parkway occupies this trestle's right-of-way. Photograph courtesy of Bygonely (https://www.bygonely.com/olympia-1890s/: accessed December 1, 2022).

Opposite middle: Image 28. A post-1899 view north from the Marshville (Long) Bridge. The Port Townsend Southern Railroad trestle stretches into the distance. A train of logs which originated at the Mason County Logging Company (at Bordeaux) is visible. Photograph used by permission from James S. Hannum, M.D., Delusions of Grandeur, The Olympia & Tenino Railroad (Olympia: Hannum House Publications, 2020), page 35.

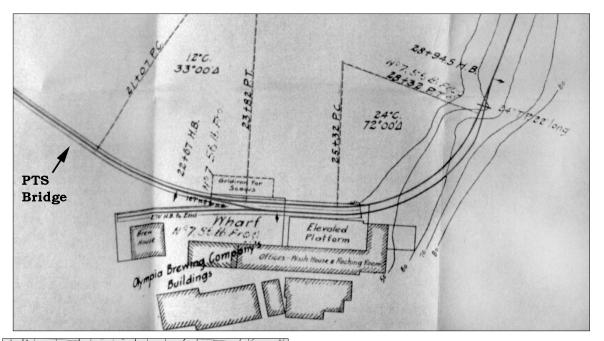
Opposite bottom: Image 29. A December 1957 photograph displaying the last westbound Northern Pacific Railroad passenger train immediately after it departed from the Water Street Station in Olympia. The image was made along the west side of Capitol Lake and is a view to the north. The locomotive is on the causeway crossing the lake. Peter J. Replinger is in the foreground wearing the St. Martins jacket. Harold Hill was the photographer. Photograph courtesy of the Peter J. Replinger collection.

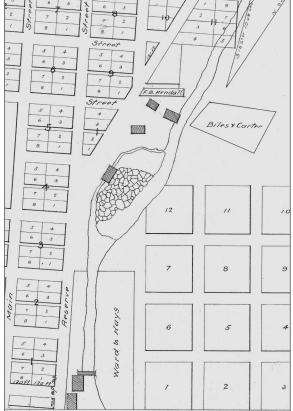
5c61-11ec-9e13-e1521a7fe368/entry/7bc273b0-584d-11ec-9795 17b3c3c30d90). The image was made circa 1906. The author could not determine when, thereafter, the bridge was removed. Later, the Olympia Brewery built its gas plant at the place formerly occupied by the bridge's west abutment (Image 43). See Image 46.

None of the structures described here were immutable. Change was a characteristic of all. No doubt, this evolution will continue.

Notes

- ¹ Puget Sound Dispatch, Seattle, May 27, 1875, page 3.
- ² Washington Standard, Olympia: April 29, page 5; May 27, page 3; June 17, page 3; and June 24, 1881, page 3.
- ³ Washington Standard: September 21, 1888, page 4; and October 17, 1890, page 4.
- ⁴ James S. Hannum, M.D., *Delusions* of *Grandeur*, *The Olympia & Tenino Railroad*, (Olympia, WA: Hannum House Publications, 2009), pages 27-36.
- ⁵ *Washington Standard*, April 17, 1891, page 3.
- ⁶ Washington Standard, June 19, 1891, page 4.



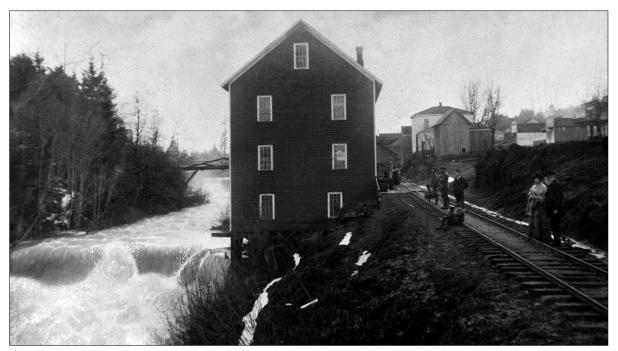


Top: Image 30. The diagram used by the Port Townsend Southern Railroad for construction of its spur and bridge leading to the old Olympia Brewery. Dated November 20, 1906, the document is archived at the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Left: Image 31. Part of the 1869 Crosby Plat of Tumwater. The earliest Upper Tumwater Bridge is visible in the Ward & Hays Donation Claim, in the lower left side of the image. Image courtesy of Washington State Archives, Digital Archives (https://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/do/4A9B16F14D5A79F528F67881ACE89F70.jpg:accessed December 4, 2022).

- ⁷ Herbert Hunt and Floyd C. Kaplan, Washington West of the Cascades: Historical and Descriptive, Volume 1 (Tacoma: S. J. Clark Publishing Company, 1917).
- ⁸ *Mason County Journal*, Shelton, Washington, November 23, 1894.
- ⁹ James S. Hannum, M.D., Gone But Not Forgotten, Abandoned Railroads of Thurston County, Washington, (Olympia, WA: Hannum House Publications, 2012), page 79.
- ¹⁰ Olympia Daily Recorder, March 16, 1915.
- ¹¹ Washington Standard, November 21, 1919, page 2.
- ¹² Washington Standard, January 2, 1920, page 9.
- Washington Standard, June 17, 1921, page 2.
- ¹⁴ Jennifer Crooks (2017, October 18), Connecting People and Places: Olympia's Fourth Avenue Bridges (https://www.thurstontalk.com/2017/10/18/connecting-people-places-olympias-fourth-avenue-bridges/: accessed November 15, 2022).
- ¹⁵ Washington Standard, March 19, 1915, page 2.
- Olympia Historical Society & Bigelow House Museum (2016, February 14), Fifth Avenue Dam and Bridge Construction (https://olympia

- history.org/fifth-avenue-dam-and-bridge-construction-21416/ : accessed November 16, 2022).
- ¹⁷ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Swantown (https://www.pacific-hwy.net/: accessed November 18, 2022).
- ¹⁸ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Swantown.
- ¹⁹ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Swantown.
- ²⁰ ThurstonTalk, History of Olympia's Shorelines (https://www.thurstontalk.com/2012/11/11/history-of-olympias-shorelines/: accessed November 19, 2022).
- ²¹ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Swantown.
- ²² Washington Standard, August 15, 1890, page 3.
- ²³ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Swantown.
- Washington Standard, October 2,1891, page 3.
- Washington Standard, May 16,1890, page 4.
- Washington Standard, July 18,1890, page 4.
- ²⁷ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Tumwater.





- ²⁸ Washington Standard, July 17, 1869, page 3.
- ²⁹ Washington Standard, May 1, 1885, page 3.
- ³⁰ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Tumwater.
- ³¹ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Tumwater.
- Washington Standard, November 13, 1896, page 4.

Opposite top: Image 32. An 1879 view to the south in Tumwater. The version of the Upper Tumwater Bridge constructed in the 1870s is visible on the left side of the Gelbach Flour Mill (in the center of the image). To the right of the mill is the track of the narrow-gauge Olympia & Chehalis Valley Railroad. Photograph courtesy of the Olympia Tumwater Foundation, 110.44.503.

Opposite bottom: Image 33. A view northeast from the west side of the Deschutes River in Tumwater. The photographer was located downriver from the Upper Falls, and immediately upriver from the site of the Upper Tumwater Bridge. The version of the bridge visible here was built about 1890. The north end of the Tumwater trolley station can be seen on the far right side of the photograph. Track of the Port Townsend Southern Railroad is in the foreground. Photograph courtesy of the Olympia Tumwater Foundation, #179.

- ³³ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Tumwater.
- ³⁴ Interstate Commerce Commission Reports: Reports and Decisions of the Interstate Commerce Commission of the United States, Volume 116 I (Washington, D.C.: Interstate Commerce Commission, 1927), page 376.
- ³⁵ James S. Hannum, M.D., *Delusions of Grandeur*, page 131.
- ³⁶ Daily Olympian, January 17, 1974, page 1.
- ³⁷ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Boston Street Bridge.
- ³⁸ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Boston Street Bridge.
- ³⁹ The Historic Pacific Highway in Washington-Boston Street Bridge.
- 40 Construction of Tumwater Falls Park, 1962, Brewery Park at Tumwater Falls History, (https://olytumfoundation.org/what-we-do/tumwater-falls-park/: accessed December 10, 2022).
- ⁴¹ Thurston County Deed Book 12, page 782, deed written March 2, 1879 and recorded in 1881.
- ⁴² Washington Standard, March 1, 1879, page 6.
- ⁴³ Tumwater Historic District, United States Department of the Interior, National Register of Historic Places In-







Top left: Image 34. A 1920 view toward the northeast showing the current (2023) Boston Street Bridge. In 1915, it replaced the Upper Tumwater Bridge seen in Image 32. Photograph courtesy of the Brewmaster's House Collection.

Top right: Image 35. Building the foot bridge near the Upper Falls in 1962. The view is toward the south and the image was probably made from the Boston Street Bridge. Construction of Tumwater Falls Park, 1962, Brewery Park at Tumwater Falls History, (https://olytumfoundation.org/whatwe-do/tumwater-falls-park/: accessed December 10, 2022).

Left: Image 36. A post-1890 photograph showing the view north along the Deschutes River in Tumwater. It was probably made from the contemporary Upper Tumwater Bridge. The large structure on the left is the Gelbach Flouring Mill. Approximately 100 feet farther downriver was the Olympia Light & Power Company's dam and associated powerplant used to produce electricity. The new dam raised the level of the water enough that Gelbach's older dam was no longer visible. The power company's flume entered the top of the powerplant. It carried water obtained from the river above the Upper Falls. Photograph courtesy of Olympia Tumwater Foundation, 110.44.442.

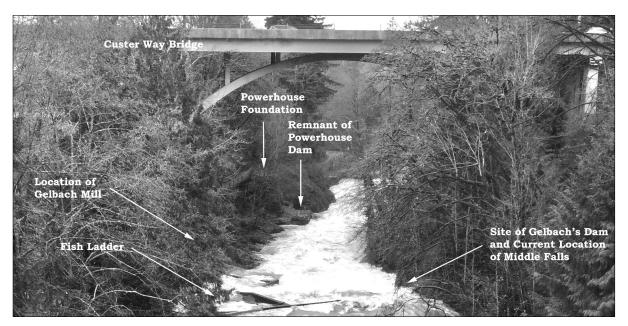


Image 37. A December 2022 view north from the Boston Street Bridge. Locations for several previously existing structures are indicated. Photograph by the author.

ventory – Nomination Form, item 7, page 2, date entered May 22, 1978.

- ⁴⁴ Thurston County Deed Book 23, page 79, dated May 3, 1890.
- Thurston County Deed Book 26, page 525, dated August 13, 1891.
- 46 Washington Standard, October 3,1890, page 4.
- ⁴⁷ Washington Standard, March 9, 1883, page 4.
- ⁴⁸ "Cover Story," *It's the Water News* (Tumwater: Olympia Brewing Company, November 1962), page 2.
- ⁴⁹ Dean G. Shacklett, "Scenic Park Plan Outlined," *The Daily Olympian*, January 11, 1962, page 1.

- ⁵⁰ "Bridge replaced," *The Daily Olympian*, July 28, 1996, page 19.
- ⁵¹ *Pioneer and Democrat*, Olympia, July 22, 1859, page 2.

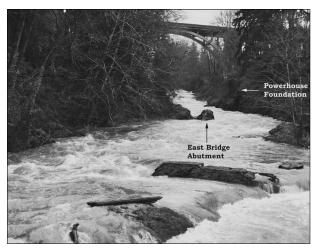
Dr. Hannum is a retired physician and surgeon who spent his early years in Michigan. He arrived in western Washington in 1971 as a member of the U.S. Public Health Service. Railroad history has been a lifelong interest, and he has written several books on the subject.





Opposite top: Image 38. A view south (upriver) toward the Olympia Light & Power Company's older powerhouse and dam near the Middle Falls. The photograph is dated 1890 and was made from the footbridge visible in Image 39. By then, the flume leading to that powerplant had been removed. Photograph courtesy of Olympia Tumwater Foundation, 107.1.155

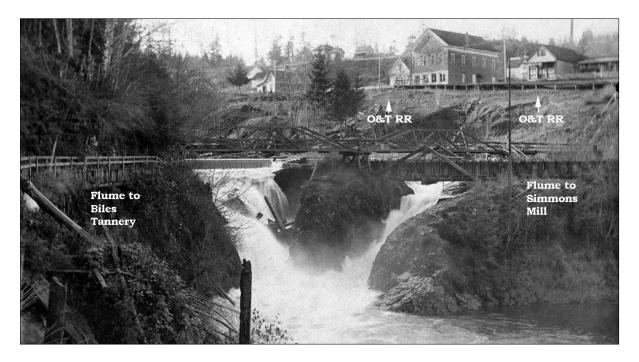
Opposite bottom: Image 39. A post-1891 view upriver from the region of the Lower Falls. A low dam, immediately upriver from those falls, is visible in the foreground. In the distance is the Olympia Light & Power Company's original powerhouse and farther upriver, the Gelbach Flouring Mill. A distinctive rock serves as the eastside abutment for the footbridge seen downriver from the powerhouse. That rock also appears in Image 40. Photograph courtesy of Washington State Historical Society, Catalog ID C1947.155.4.

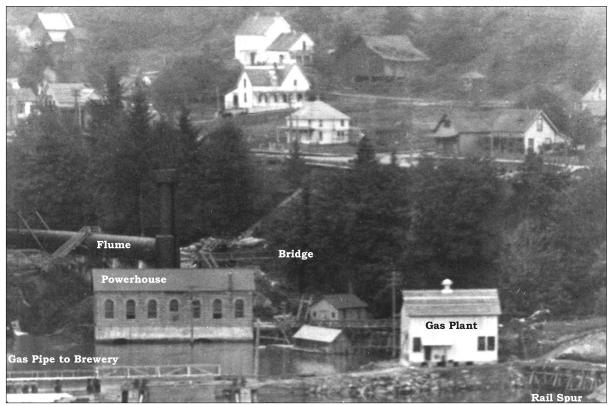




This page top: Image 40. A December 2022 view upriver from the current Deschutes River footbridge at the Lower Falls. The same rock visible in Image 39 is seen near the middle of the photograph. The foundation used for the original Olympia Light & Power Company powerhouse is discernable. Photograph by the author.

This page bottom: Image 41. A very early photograph of the Lower Falls of the Deschutes River. The image is dated from 1860 to 1885. The view is upriver, prior to the existence of buildings directly downriver from the falls. A suspension bridge spans the falls. Another structure visible farther upriver may be one of the several sequential versions of the Upper Tumwater Bridge. Image courtesy of Washington State Historical Society, Catalog ID C2017.0.171.







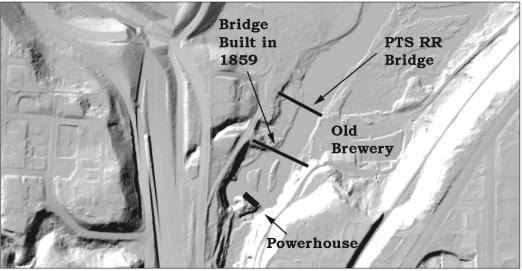
Opposite top: Image 42. A post-1878 view upriver, across the Lower Falls of the Deschutes River. William Duckering was the photographer. On the left, the flume leading to the Biles Tannery is visible. Another flume, on the right, supplied water power to the Simmons Mill. Image courtesy of Washington State Historical Society, Catalog ID C1962.1748.12.

Opposite bottom: Image 43. A post-1908 view southwest toward the Olympia Light & Power Company's powerhouse at the Lower Falls. A short trestle connected the powerhouse to the west side of Deschutes River. Also visible is the coal gas manufacturing plant operated by the Olympia Brewery (built in 1908) and the Port Townsend Southern Railroad's

spur to that facility. Gas was piped to the brewery building via a small bridge. Photograph courtesy of Brewmaster's House Collection, HHM1059.

This page: Image 44. The footbridge at the Lower Falls in 2023. The Historic Tumwater Falls Bridge (https://www.thurstontalk.com/2022/07/30/the-historic-tumwater-falls-bridge/: accessed December 16, 2022).





Top: Image 45. The first foot bridge constructed near the Lower Falls. It was located approximately 100 yards downriver from the position occupied, in 2023, by the foundation of the former Lower Falls powerhouse. By approximately 1890, only the west abutment of this bridge was visible in Image 21. Image 45 is dated 1870-1885. Photograph courtesy of Olympia Tumwater Foundation, Entry/Object ID 110.44.502 (https://hub.catalogit.app/7254/folder/cadff510-5d04-11ec-9992-2d3811dfd6a7/entry/2f2e0040-584e-11ec-9795-17b3c3c30d90: accessed December 31, 2022).

Bottom: Image 46. A recent LiDAR ground imaging view of the region around the mouth of the Deschutes River. Relative positions of several features have been added by the author. Image courtesy of US Geological Survey (https://apps.nationalmap.gov/viewer/: accessed December 31, 2022).